



October 2, 2017

Dear Michigan Senators,

Our organizations are committed to eliminating unnecessary government restrictions to market entry and promoting free market solutions to the policy problems that face our country. Today we write to encourage you to support creating a mid-level provider in dental services in Michigan. This policy is reflected in SB 541 and, if approved, would tear down an unnecessary government barrier to accessing the dental services that Michigan dentists can provide to patients throughout the state while allowing better use of state health care and taxpayer dollars.

Dental therapists are highly educated, thoroughly trained and tested professionals who operate as part of a larger dental team and provide much needed preventive and restorative treatments under the supervision of a dentist. Dentists who want to expand their practices to include educated and qualified midlevel dental practitioners should be free to do so.

Often, proposals that increase health care options for underserved populations do so at significant cost to taxpayers. A dental therapist, however, utilizes the free market to make dental services more available to patients and more economical for dentists to provide. It is undeniable that there is a dental shortage, particularly in rural areas of Michigan. The policies in SB 541 would help alleviate this issue by permitting, but not requiring, dentists to hire dental therapists. The state should not stand in their way.

Innovative ideas like this have faced intense opposition, but are very similar to the fights that took place decades ago with the emergence of midlevel medical providers. Physicians began working and collaborating with midlevel providers who had clinical experience to fill a void left by specialization in the medical field decades ago. Today's dentists and patients deserve the same opportunity.

Finally, while this common sense, free market solution will make it easier for all Michigan residents to obtain affordable dental care, it may especially benefit rural communities. In the process, dentists who are interested in expanding their small business practices will have another option through which to do so. SB 541 represents a strong step in state-based free market health care reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MVBK".

Michael Van Beek
Mackinac Center for Public Policy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grover Norquist".

Grover Norquist
Americans for Tax Reform

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Deane Waldman MD MBA".

Dr. Deane Waldman, MD, MBA
Texas Public Policy Foundation